

Facts & Information

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Simple steps to a lower energy bill

Batten Down the Hatches

Did You Know. . . According to The Sunset Home Energy Book, about 60 percent of winter heating energy can be lost through the uninsulated parts of your house -- walls, ceilings, and floors. So, batten down those hatches by filling cracks and crevices and putting in insulation where needed.



- Caulk all joints in the exterior of your house. Pay special attention to your windows and doors and other joints between dissimilar materials.
- Insulating foam is an easy alternative to caulk. The foam comes in cans and can be piped into cracks and crevices. It expands to fill the spaces and the excess can be trimmed off when it dries.
- Renew and/or install weatherstripping on all doors.
- Make sure your house is adequately insulated. Regional experts recommend an R-38 (12-16") rating in your attic.
- Insulate your hot water heater.

Cheap Fixes



Did You Know. . . Simply by lowering your thermostat by one degree, your furnace will use 7 percent less energy (for settings between 65° and 72°F).

- Wear a sweater and set your thermostat between 65 to 72 degrees.
- Lower your hot water heater thermostat to 120 degrees.
- Wash clothes with cold water. Take cooler and shorter showers.
- Limit use of your appliances. Only wash full loads of dishes and clothes.
- Air dry your dishes and hang dry your clothes. When you use your dryer, throw in one or two dry towels. It speeds drying.
- Cook several items at once or in a row to reduce preheating time and energy. Once you are done cooking and the oven is turned off, open the oven door and let the excess heat warm the house.

WASHINGTON
UTC
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

P.O. Box 47250
1300 S. Evergreen Park Dr SW
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

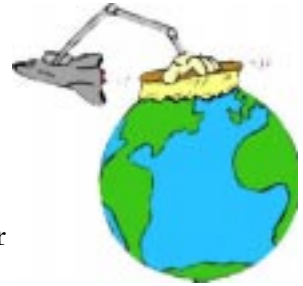
Local: (360)664-1160
Toll Free: 800-562-6150
TTY: 877-210-5963 (toll free)

Web site: www.wutc.wa.gov
Email: info@wutc.wa.gov

To request availability of
documents in alternate
format, call (360)664-1133.

Keep Clean

Did You Know. . . A clean home can save you money? Dirty furnaces, appliances, and fixtures must work harder and use more energy to do their jobs. Keeping your home and its contents clean helps those energy eaters run more efficiently. So roll up those sleeves and get out the mop and bucket!



- Banish the dust bunnies. Clean the lint trap in your dryer after every load and make sure the dryer hose and vent are clear. Clean the coils on your refrigerator and freezer so they run more efficiently.
- Some dust bunnies, escaping your every effort to banish them, will end up clogging your furnace. Change your filter frequently, as often as once a month, so your furnace (a major energy gobbler) won't have to work as hard.
- The reflectors on your stove capture heat by directing it back up to your pots and pans. A dirty reflector can't do its job. The same goes for a dirty oven. Keep both areas clean to make the most of the heat generated by your stove.

Go Green

Did You Know. . . Natural gas is used to generate electricity. So by cutting down your electric use, you can help reduce demand for natural gas. By reducing demand for natural gas, we can take some of the pressure off natural gas prices which have climbed significantly in recent years. You can do all sorts of things to save energy which will benefit your bank account and environment.



- Landscape around your house. Trees and shrubs beautify your home, but they also help cool your home against the blazing sun in the summer and protect against harsh winds in the winter. Landscaping also can improve air quality by filtering impurities. Planting native plants cuts down on watering.
- Save electricity by turning off unused lights. Consider using alternative, more efficient lighting such as fluorescent lighting, lower wattage bulbs, and halogen lighting. It's also a good idea to use fewer bulbs in multi-light fixtures.
- Use a six-minute wash cycle with cold water to wash your laundry. Your clothes will get cleaned and last longer. You will also use less water and energy.

Timing is Everything

Did You Know. . . Making the best use of your time can be applied to other resources. Treating energy and water as valuable resource to be used at the appropriate time means you can have the same level of comfort and quality of life yet still use less energy.

- Turn down the heat at night. Better yet, install programmable timers that do this task automatically. Many allow you to set numerous adjustments to the temperature according to when you will be home.
- Use a programmable timer on your hot water heater, so precious energy isn't wasted heating water in the middle of the night when it's not needed. If you are going to be gone longer than three days, turn the hot water heater off completely.
- Appliances older than 10 years are generally not as efficient as newer models. When possible, replace them with newer energy efficient models.
- Get in the habit of running appliances such as the dishwasher during off-peak hours. Peak energy costs your utility more to provide than off-peak energy.



Check it Out



Did You Know. . . Many excellent resources are out there to help you conserve energy and reduce those natural gas expenses. Investing a little time in researching other ways to reduce your gas consumption will pay off in lower energy bills, a more comfortable home and a cleaner environment.

- Your local library has a variety of resources that can help you conserve energy and the environment.
- Your energy company can provide tips to conserve energy and may even offer free energy audits to pinpoint the energy gobblers specific to your own home.
- Seattle City Light's website: <http://cityofseattle.net/light/conserve/tips/>
- WSU Cooperative Extension Energy program: <http://www.energy.wsu.edu/>
- The Energy Ideas Clearinghouse: <http://www.energyideas.org/>